

How WFD can support democratic processes through an electoral integrity approach

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- WFD offers a grounded and in-depth understanding of key election/election reform challenges.
- WFD identifies tailored and sequenced solutions for electoral reform and wider improvements to the electoral environment.
- WFD provides an opportunity for regular engagement and dialogue with leading thematic experts, democracy support organisations, and election observation groups during ongoing research and analysis.

Democracy has been declining globally for 10 years, according to Freedom House and other global democracy indices. This decline is driven by growing inequality, an increasingly polarised or constricted space for information to flow, and declining trust in democratic institutions and those running them. Elections, one of the more visible elements of democracy, have reflected these dynamics. Internal and external actors' efforts to shape and manipulate electoral outcomes have been uncovered in leading global democracies. In countries where democratic roots are more nascent, entrenched interests can use elections to create a democratic veneer of allowing political participation and plurality, rather than meaningfully supporting democratic growth.

The integrity of the process and outcome of elections is fundamental if they are to contribute to, and be part of, wider reforms to improve good governance.

Elections are a product of constant reform and evolution. Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) employs an election cycle approach to monitor and assess ongoing events from voter registration and party primaries to the appointment of election management bodies and legislative electoral reform. WFD uses this approach to contextualise emerging trends and challenges and their potential impacts on electoral integrity.

WFD's electoral integrity approach also uses critical junctures across the election cycle as opportunities to explore participatory inclusion, media and social media influence, and civic engagement, and to think about how incremental changes can support improvements not just ahead of a looming poll, but across multiple election cycles.

Electoral integrity in practice: Zambia

Our FCDO-funded work in Zambia around the 2021 elections illustrates the way in which the electoral integrity and cycle approaches can support improved understandings and inform wider reform processes. Ahead of the polls an electoral political economy analysis (EPEA), alongside technical support from an election advisor, offered clear areas where UK engagement could improve the credibility of the process in the short-term. The analysis also identified longer-term challenges which fed into the development of a comprehensive election reform roadmap that provides guidance on opportunities for sequencing and ensuring all key election stakeholders participate.



The detailed analysis WFD offered through a sequenced set of activities provided guidance and valuable entry points to engage partners on electoral and reform processes

British High Commissioner in Zambia

WFD's electoral integrity toolkit

WFD has developed five tools that can be deployed across the three main phases of the election cycle – pre-election, election period and post-election – to strengthen electoral integrity and contribute to improvements in the wider democratic environment.

The research-focused tools offer:

- Granular information about specific aspects of an election or election reform process.
- Insights that support development partners to set the diplomatic agenda on identified issues.
- Candid analysis of opportunities and recommendations for electoral reform.

Our tools can support a better understanding of specific components of the electoral landscape, think through where opportunities for reform exist and how they might be pursued and identify and explain both the technical and wider impediments to support the integrity of an elections and how to develop a coherent reform agenda.

Pre-election:

Electoral Political Economy Analysis (EPEA)

Taking place at least six months prior to an election process, EPEAs draw on interviews with key national election stakeholders to provide detailed analysis on:

- Areas where there is either need for additional support or reform and political will among key election stakeholders for it to happen.
- Potential threats to an election process and how these might be reduced or mitigated.
- The willingness of national stakeholders to engage in the short, medium and longer term, on the issue and who those interlocutors should be.

During the election period:

Election Expert/Advisory Missions (EEAM)

The EEAM approach supports an in-depth understanding of a key thematic area or areas that are not well captured in largescale election observation missions. 2-4 international and national experts, deployed over a period of 1-5 months, provide regular analysis on the themes in the run-up to, during and the immediate aftermath of voting day. Specific and action-oriented recommendations are developed based on the research findings. The reports and analysis, which are not made public, can be used to shape strategic support to the country across the election cycle.

Embedded election experts

Embedding technical election experts on a part-time basis within a diplomatic mission offers ongoing support, guidance and technical advice. The expert can help in identifying:

- areas where election processes are weak or require strengthening.
- practical steps to support efforts to address these issues.

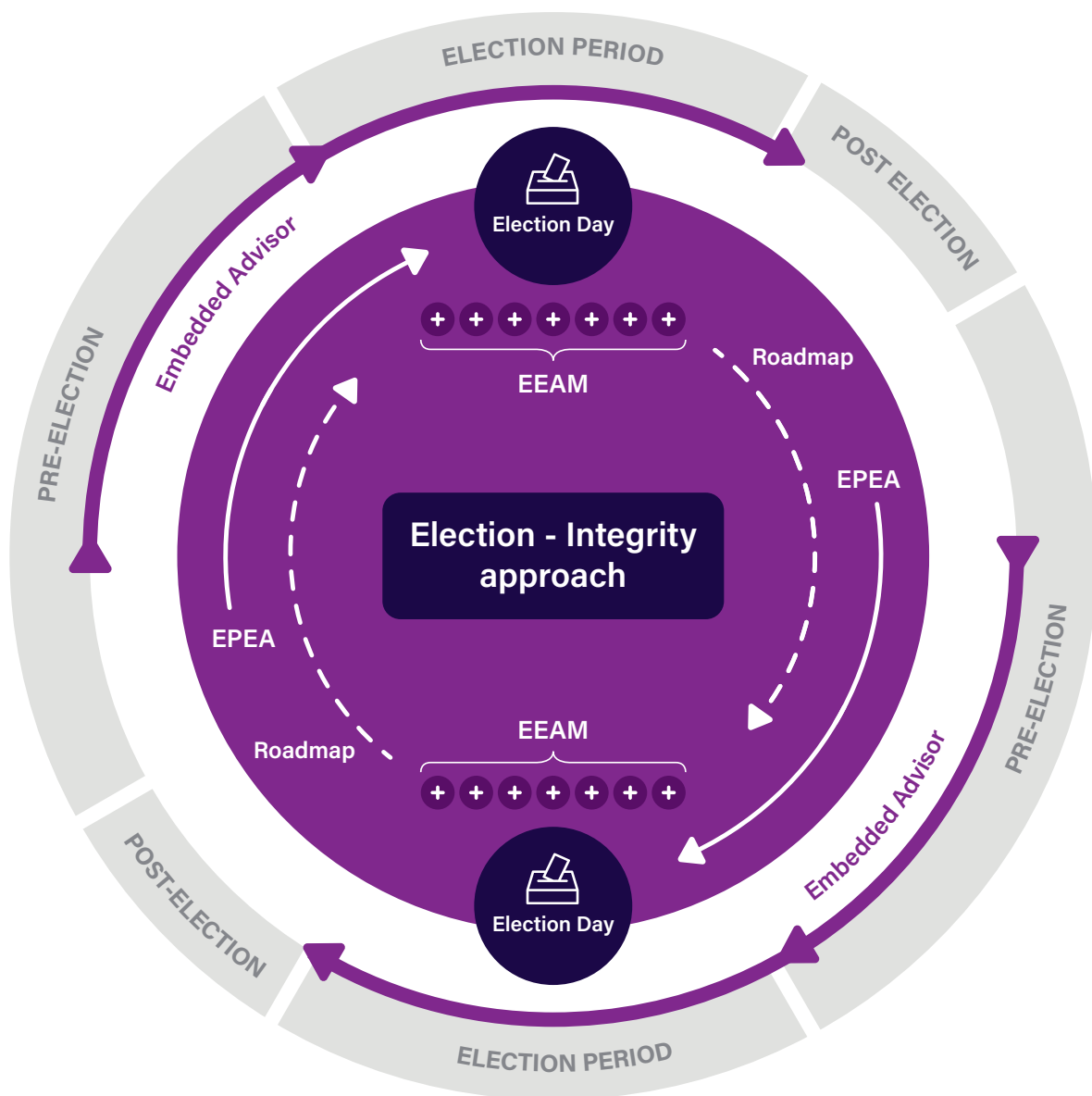
Online trainings

WFD offers free online trainings on election observation and the electoral integrity approach to enhance internal understandings of key approaches to engagement around elections.





During the post-election period which becomes the next pre-election period:

Election reform roadmaps

Key areas for electoral reform are often identified in the post-election period because of scrutiny in the run-up to and on polling day. Tailored election reform roadmaps that use a consultative approach can support the development of a sequenced and targeted approach to a particular issue, or collection of issues, that can be achieved incrementally in a process viewed as credible by key stakeholders.



Key: Optimal timing for the following activities:

	Roadmap	3 months after to 1 year before
	EPEA (Electoral Political Economy Analysis)	18-3 months before elections
	EEAM (Election Expert/Advisory Missions)	3 months before to 2 months after
	Embedded Advisor	12 months before to 3 months after

When should engagement begin?

Engagement can start at any point in the cycle. Where possible, sequenced engagement multiples impact. Electoral integrity initiatives work best when they are embedded into wider governance initiatives that aim to improve the democratic environment, such as those focused on women’s political inclusion or efforts that strengthen institutional transparency and accountability.

Learn more

For further information about the tools and their application or for details about WFD’s free online training courses, contact your WFD country representative or Tanja Hollstein Head of Practice – Elections tanja.hollstein@wfd.org.